

# Rural Tourism Marketing

## Chapter Six – Advertising & Public Relations

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Like it or not, good or bad, your area has an image.

It may not be the image you want it to have. It might have been shaped by a television news story about a fuel spill into a creek, or it might have been the result of positive news coverage about your annual Spring Festival. Your community's image might be of a lovely mountain village on the way to somewhere else, or it might be of a hot desert community with a gas station and a Burger King.

Whatever your area's image, somehow people developed the perceptions that they now retain. It could have been through the well-crafted efforts of an earlier advertising or public relations campaign, or it could have been purely accidental.

Chances are you have no idea how the images you have of other places were developed, and it certainly wasn't an overnight process.

Think about Yosemite or San Francisco or Fresno. You probably have an image in your mind of all three. You might picture Yosemite with cascading waterfalls and beautiful meadows, or you might picture bumper-to-bumper traffic through the woods. San Francisco might bring images of cable cars and Alcatraz to mind, or your first thoughts might be of the terrible earthquake of 1989 (we hope not!). Perhaps you have never been to Fresno, but chances are from one source or another, you have developed an image of that community as well.



People hear about places from television news, from radio, from their favorite magazines, from their friends or from a cab driver. People see signs along the roadway, or view Huell Howser on TV.

Regardless of the source, somehow people hear about a place. This chapter discusses ways to create the kind of image that will make people want to visit.

## Public Relations vs. Advertising

There are two ways to create and shape the image of a destination. The first method is paid advertising. It gives you complete control of the message that people see. You decide what to say and how, what pictures to show and why. You control the timing of your message, and the way in which people respond to it.

The second method is through the use of public relations techniques. When we talk about PR, we're talking primarily about providing information to the press about your area, in the hope that they will publish that information in one form or another. You might find yourself responding to a direct request from a reporter for information, or you may send out unsolicited information to the media about your area.

In public relations, you control the information you give to the media, but you have no control over how they use it, or what they say.

Briefly, the advantages of paid advertising are timing and total message control, and the disadvantages are the expense and the reduced credibility of the message. In other words, when people know that they are viewing advertising, they also know that you are totally controlling what you are saying about your product.

The advantages of public relations are the lower expense and the enhanced credibility that comes from having your message presented to the public by a supposedly unbiased third party such as a reporter or broadcaster. The disadvantage is that your carefully created material may end up in a writer's trash can, or that the story that comes out about your area may be nothing at all like you hoped it would be!

To effectively market your community as a tourist destination, you probably will want to use both advertising and public relations to get the word out.

## Paid Advertising

There is a funny thing about advertising; it sounds like you're going to battle. We wage advertising *campaigns*. And like missiles and rockets, advertising is *aimed* at specific *targets*. And just like the weapons of war, it can hit or miss in dramatic fashion!

In the early chapters of this handbook, we took a look at who currently visits your destination and why. *Armed* (another war word) with this knowledge, you can decide how to position your destination through your advertising. Positioning is the most important decision you will make about your advertising campaign.



**Dressed for battle, the Advertising Committee chair unveils his strategy for the target market!**

How will you *position* your destination? As a fisherman's paradise, as a romantic getaway (*a la* Monterey) or as a sophisticated shopping Mecca where selection is fabulous and price is no object (Rodeo Drive). Remember that a luxury car is not a sports car, which is not a sport utility vehicle. The way products are positioned reflects what they are, or what they are designed to do.

**Helpful Hint:** Claiming “We Have it All” or “We’re in the Center of Everything” is to not position your destination at all. You should try to focus on one major attribute, and resist the political pressure to be broadly inclusive. Remember the only car that tried to be everything to everybody was the Edsel!



### **Always be True to Who You Are**

Let's take a look at Las Vegas, and what can go wrong if you try to change who you are.

Las Vegas is positioned as an adult playground, where you can engage in (almost) all of your fantasies. When we think of Las Vegas, we think of gambling, glamorous showgirls and re-creations of Paris, Venice and New York.

Several years ago, Las Vegas tried to reposition itself as a family destination with disastrous results. You may recall that the national news broadcasts reported stories, placed by the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, that the “New Las Vegas” was a family playground where kids would have as much fun as parents. The problem was that families with kids didn't spend as much time gambling as couples who left the children at home, so casino revenue dropped.

Kids took up seats on airplanes that would have been filled by gamblers, and families who came once for the novelty didn't return nearly as often as Las Vegas' regular customer base. And if that wasn't bad enough, the core weekend gamblers were downright irritated by all the children running up and down the casino aisles! Business nose-dived, and hotel and casino operators quickly pressured the CVA to drop the “family” campaign and return to the tried-and-true position as an adult fantasy destination.

***The moral of the story is..Don't try to be what you're not!***



## The Five “W’s” of Advertising

Once you have developed your *positioning strategy*, you need to develop your *creative strategy*, or what you will say in your advertising and how you will say it. In other words, how will you tell people that you have the most romantic small community in California? Or that the fish are bigger and bite faster in your region than anywhere on earth?

The language of your advertisements, and the artwork or photographs you use, are decided during this stage of development.

Although creative strategies differ, they all must answer the first three “W” questions:

- **Who** is our potential customer? (Our target market)
- **What** should our advertising do? (The objective)
- **Why** should anyone come to our community or region? (and not go someplace else)
- **Where** are the other two “W’s”? (We’ll get to *when* and *where* to advertise in just a moment!)

Your creative material (the ads) should also build support for your position and set a tone and “personality” for your advertising.

Many of these suggestions (including the war terms!) come from an excellent book called “How to Advertise” by Kenneth Roman and Jan Maas, the masterminds behind the “I Love New York” advertising campaign...perhaps the best destination marketing campaign of all time!

Mass and Roman emphasize the importance of setting your destination apart from the others, advertising what is *important*, not what is *obvious*, and not changing your strategy without good reason (Las Vegas).

## Where to Advertise - Newspapers and Magazines

Newspapers and magazines are what industry pros refer to as “print” media (for obvious reasons). Let’s take a look at their advantages and disadvantages, as well as some tips for getting the best results.

Newspapers reach the most people in a concentrated area, such as a city or region. They are most frequently published daily, or weekly or biweekly in smaller communities. Ad prices are set by the “column inch,” which means that you pay a certain price per every inch deep by one column wide. An ad one column wide and six inches deep equals six column inches. By the same token, an ad two columns wide by three inches deep is also six column inches. (The number of columns wide x the number of inches deep x the column inch rate = the cost of the ad). Usually, the bigger the ad and the more ads you buy, the lower the price per inch that you will be able to negotiate from the newspaper.



***Really Helpful Hint!*** Everything is negotiable, especially in the world of advertising. You might ask your ad representative if your organization is eligible for a non-profit discount.



### Advantages of Newspapers

- Great for getting across the facts, special-event dates and phone numbers that readers can keep.
- Can usually be bought on very short notice.
- Reach a broad audience, and can be purchased by “section” (sports, lifestyle, travel, etc.) that help you target your audience even further.

### Disadvantages of Newspapers

- Your ad disappears with the next edition, unless you buy it all over again (short shelf life).
- Unfortunately, a lot of younger people don’t read the newspaper.
- Not nearly as targeted as special publications and magazines.

Magazines reach people with a concentrated *interest*, and usually not people in a concentrated geographic *area*. There are magazines for men, magazines for women, magazines for teens and magazines for fishermen. There are probably magazines for teenage fishermen! Magazines allow you to reach a specific target audience. That audience can be as broad as those who read People, or as specific as those who read Life Insurance Underwriter (for a *really* specific example).



Magazines price their ads by a portion of their page, such as a full-page ad, half page, quarter page, one-sixth page, etc. Like newspapers, the more ads you run the lower the price you can negotiate. Media sales reps (and this is true for all media) generally like you to sign a contract to run more than one ad, and a longer contract generally nets a better rate for each ad.

### **Advantages of Magazines**

- You can target a very specific audience.
- Readers generally have your ad in their house for a month, or until the magazine is published again.
- Several people usually read each magazine.
- You have the opportunity to fully explore the use of color, creative text and a more lush appearance than a newspaper ad.
- Magazines occasionally offer “editorial calendars” letting you know what stories they will run in advance. You can target your advertisement to the editorial.

### **Disadvantages of Magazines**

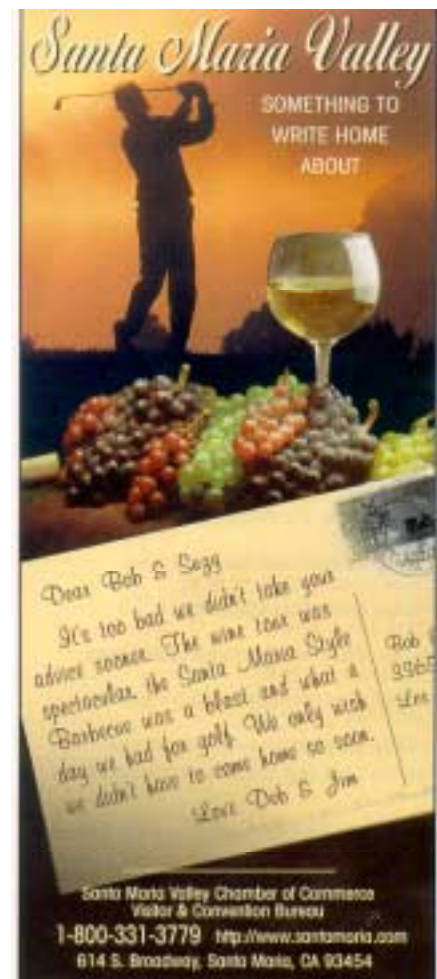
- You have to plan for publication much farther in advance.
- Advertising costs can be quite high

**Helpful Hint:** *If you have ads prepared in advance, you can often take advantage of discounted “remnant space” in popular magazines. This is space that either didn’t sell and was blocked for an ad, or space that is available because someone else canceled their ad at the last minute. Ask your sales rep about their policy on “remnant space.”*



## Some Important Tips for Effective Print Advertising

- **Say it All in the Headline** – Don't fall to the temptation to be so cute in the headline that you say nothing. The headline should convey the entire idea of the ad.
- **Show How You Can Benefit the Reader-** The advertising headline "California – Find Yourself Here" says so much more than "Come to California." It offers a *benefit* to the reader.
- **Be Positive, Not Negative** – "California, Better than Oregon" probably wouldn't win any awards, or friends!
- **Make the Reader Curious with Your Illustration** – Draw the reader into the ad with the illustration. Peak their curiosity.
- **In Travel Especially, Use Photos, not Drawings** – Your ad will be remembered much better, and stand out on the page with a photo.
- **Don't Over-Complicate the Ad** - One big picture works better than several small ones. Avoid trying to say *too much*.
- **Try to See in Advance What Your Ad will Look Like on the Page** - Ask to see your ad on the page on which it will run, with the other ads and editorial surrounding it. It will look much different than when you first saw it on a beautiful glossy sheet of paper with lots of white space around it.
- **Keep Your Ad Look Consistent Every Time** – Your ads will get much more recognition when they have a "look" to them that is all your own.
- **If Advertising a Contest, Push the Contest Before the Destination-** Remember the attraction of giving something away is what will *draw* viewers into your add. Feature the contest in the headline, *then* promote your destination.
- **Make Sure Every Ad Can Stand Alone** – Only you will read your entire series of advertisements. Tell a complete story with every ad.



## Where to advertise - Radio

A radio station, like a magazine, targets a specific audience. They do this by the types of music they play, the way the announcers speak, or the information they convey. Each radio station can tell you the specific demographic (statistical target audience) that they try to reach.

However unlike magazines, radio stations usually target specific geographic regions much like newspapers do, although that region may in some cases be as broad as “Southern California” or an entire state.

Radio commercials (sometimes called “spots”) are usually purchased in 30 or 60-second blocks. Occasionally you might be able to purchase a 15-second commercial. The station will offer several purchase plans, from “run-of-station” (ROS) where the commercials may run at any



time during the station’s broadcast day, to very specific time placements (for example, only between 6:00 and 10:00 in the morning, called “morning drive time.”) The more demanding you are for specific time placement, the more the commercials will cost. Again, sales reps love contracts and will give you a discount if you agree to run for a certain length of time (usually a month or longer will yield a significant discount). The highest rate you can pay is the “one time rate.”

### Advantages of Radio:

- Market segments can be precisely targeted by age, sex and interests. You can reach people who are likely to be in their cars, or at home relaxing before bedtime.
- Radio offers the opportunity of high repetition, driving home a message with many spots in a short time period.
- Radio is immediate and timely. You can ask your audience to “phone now!”
- Radio stations love promotional contests. More than any other medium, you can trade hotel rooms and vacations for air time, often with no cash at all!

### Disadvantages of Radio:

- The listener often isn’t focused on the message. They are talking, driving, working or playing and may miss your information completely.
- Radio is a poor medium for conveying information that you want the listener to remember, like your “800” number.



- With more CD players and tape decks in cars, radio often doesn't reach the vacation traveler nearly as well as outdoor (billboard) advertising.

### **A Few Suggestions to Make Your Radio Advertising More Effective**

- **Remember Radio Uses the Imagination** – Make your spot appealing to the listener's imagination. Use "word images" to convey your destination's charms.
- **Try to Make the "Sound" of Your Commercial Stand Out** – The announcer's distinctive voice sells Motel 6, and makes you remember him.
- **Keep It Simple** – With all the distractions challenging radio listeners, it's impossible to communicate complex ideas. Stick to one big idea.
- **Say Your Destination's Name Early** – You have 30 or 60 seconds to say your name several times. Don't try to surprise the audience at the end!
- **Present a Timely Message** – The short lead-time inherent with radio allows you to tailor your message to current events or weather. (Ski resorts can order commercials right after snowstorms.)
- **Use Music, But Keep it Simple** – Music is risky as it can sound really good or *really* hokey! If you use a jingle, pay for a good one and keep it simple. There is nothing worse than a really bad radio jingle.
- **Drivers are a Relatively Captive Audience** – Surveys show radio listeners in their cars hear and retain more than home listeners. That's good news for anyone selling a tourist destination. Drivers stuck on an LA freeway are probably dreaming of being somewhere else!
- **Ask Listeners to Take Action** – People respond to radio requests for action. Don't be afraid to ask listeners to "call now for information."
- **Use the Strength of Radio Personalities** – Consider having your commercial read "live" by a popular personality rather than pre-recorded. Capitalize on an announcer's own style.
- **Reach Ethnic Groups with Special Messages** – The highest rated radio stations in Los Angeles are Spanish language stations. Consider creating commercials specifically for Hispanic, Black and other target audiences.

### **Where to Advertise - Outdoor Advertising**



There is nothing bigger or bolder in the advertising world than a billboard, with the possible exception of a blimp!

Highway billboards are great for reaching travelers or commuters. They can be seen daily by a commuting local audience, or just once by vacationers passing through. They are an excellent medium for promoting destinations since they can convey a spectacular visual message, if done correctly. *Billboards sell to an audience in motion.*

Unlike radio, billboards do not reach a specific target audience, but instead reach a broad cross-section of the public.

Billboards are usually sold in two sizes, big and bigger! The biggest are called “bulletins” and can measure from 10’ x 40’ up to 20’ x 60’. They are located on major highways and freeways. They are sold either as “permanent bulletins” and rented in six-month stretches or longer, or as “rotating bulletins” where the vinyl containing your message is moved from one sign to another every sixty days.

The smaller billboards are called “posters” with the largest and most common called a “30 sheet poster” and measuring approximately 12’ x 24’ and the smaller “8 sheet poster” measuring 6’ x 12’. Posters are designed for areas where cars or pedestrians are closer and traveling slower than those viewing bulletins.

With either format prices vary widely depending on location and traffic count (the number of people driving by every day) and are sold on contracts with billing monthly. You can contract for one or several billboards.

Because of the legislative restrictions on billboards (they are relatively intrusive on the landscape, after all) outdoor advertising companies have expanded their product lines to include bus shelter advertising, giant murals on city buildings, indoor kiosks in malls and shopping centers, city busses and taxi cabs, and even advertising on trash cans on the beach!

#### **Advantages of Outdoor:**

- Billboards are big and bold, and deliver your message with power.
- The message is continual 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- It is the most localized of all media. You can reach an audience in a *very specific location*.

#### **Disadvantages of Outdoor:**

- Billboards are limited to a very brief message; seven words or less is best.

- Billboards are often not available where you want them.
- Great billboard advertising takes considerable planning.
- Freeway billboards with excellent visibility can cost \$4,000 per month and up.

**Helpful Hint:** You can often make your billboards even more eye-catching with the use of “extensions.” Extensions are pieces that jut above the rectangular surface of the board and can be used to give an illustration depth or drama. (Picture the horns of a bull extending up from the billboard surface.) Ask your sales rep about the cost of extensions before incorporating them into your design.



### A Few Ways to Make Outdoor Advertising More Effective

- **Scream It** – Billboards are no place to be subtle. You have only a moment to catch someone’s eye and deliver your message.
- **Keep it Simple** – Billboards are the art of brevity. No more than seven words, preferably less.
- **Use Bold Lettering** – Avoid fancy typefaces. Letters must be one foot tall to be readable at 400 feet.
- **Make an Impact with Images** – Again, be bold with your images as well.
- **Use Color for Readability** – The most readable combination is black on yellow. Stay with primary colors; plan for the background it will be viewed against. (Don’t use brown and green against a hillside!)
- **Use the Location to Your Advantage** – Target the message to the location. (“Paradise is only ten minutes away”).
- **Tie Your Message in with Your Print or TV** – Use key visual elements from other advertising your audience might see.
- **Personalize When You Can** – Advertising in Sacramento? Why not say “Chico...Sacramento’s Favorite Vacation Spot.”
- **Look for Human, Emotional Content** – Humor or romance work here. Billboards can be an entertainment medium for bored drivers.
- **Go for a Ride** – The only way to see your billboard, or proposed billboard locations is to drive to them and look. Look for trees, shadows or other obstructions. Don’t be satisfied with a picture of a location.

## Where to Advertise - Television

Oh, if only we could afford to be on television! How many times have you expressed that thought? Today with the advent of “infomercials” and highly targeted cable stations more destinations than ever before are discovering that television is within their financial reach. Today you can target specific demographics like those viewing Lifetime Television or CNBC in only the selected cities that suit your needs.

Of course, television is still one of the most expensive media given the cost of producing the kind of television commercial you want. But some very clever television spots have been made on a “shoestring” budget. It just takes a little imagination.



Television, like radio is purchased by the “spot” and costs are broken down into parts of the broadcast day (“dayparts”) and the number and frequency that the spots run. Television audiences, at least those on network affiliates, are both larger and more diverse than radio.

### Advantages of Television:

- Television creates an image. You can convey a strong visual theme and *show* them your destination.
- People believe what they see. They can actually see your destination, so it must be as you present it.
- Television offers great emotional appeal and involvement for the viewer and provides an atmosphere of “being there.”

### Disadvantages of Television:

- Television campaigns are probably the most expensive advertising you will do. And you can spend a lot of money for very little concrete response.
- Cheap commercials look cheap.



**Helpful Hint:** Among the most famous and effective television commercials ever made date back to the introduction of the original Volkswagen Beetle, and featured a young Dustin Hoffman simply standing in a studio next to the car. No location filming, no editing, just a simple message. Couldn't you be clever enough to do the same?

## A Few Ways to Make Television Advertising More Effective

- **What Viewers See is What They'll Remember** – Television is a visual medium. Look at your commercial with the sound off. Viewers (that *is* what they are called!) remember what they see, not what they hear.
- **Look for a Key Visual** – Find *one* image that sums up your whole story.
- **Grab the Viewer's Attention** – The first five seconds of a commercial are crucial. Audience studies show either a sharp rise or a fast drop in audience attention after the first five seconds. Offer something right off the bat.
- **Keep the Message Simple** – A good commercial is uncomplicated and to the point. Longer commercials should *repeat* important points, not add more.
- **Show People, Not Objects** – People are interested in people.
- **It Should Be Fun!** – Show that visiting your area will do what you say it will, show someone having fun.
- **Make them Remember Your Name** – Too often commercials will show a beautiful place, but not emphasize the name. Take extra pains to implant your destination name in the viewer's minds.
- **The Tone of Your Advertising Must Reflect Your Destination's Personality** – If you're fortunate enough to already have an image in the viewer's mind, your advertising *must* reflect that image.
- **Avoid Saying Too Much** – Look for the simplest, most straightforward set of words to get your message across. Try not to exceed 65 words in a 30-second spot, double that in a 60-second commercial.
- **Think in Terms of a Campaign, Not Individual Commercials** – Sure, you're a small destination and may well have to start with one. But look at your first script and pretend you will have to write another one. If you can afford it, shoot several commercials while you have the production crew based on the same *big idea*.

## Where to Advertise - Direct Mail

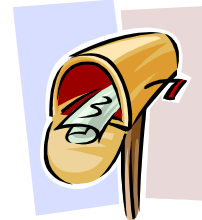
Direct mail promotion does not mean junk mail. At least it shouldn't! Direct mail is a terrific way to target people who have either previously visited your destination or shown an inclination to go by requesting earlier information. It is the most specifically targeted advertising that we have talked about so far.

Direct mail also offers the ability to specifically track your responses. Accountability! The one word that the city fathers and those others funding your marketing efforts will repeat time and time again.

The cost of direct mail includes the preparation of materials, labor and postage.

#### **Advantages of Direct Mail:**

- Direct mail can be specifically targeted and personalized.
- Direct mail can serve as a reminder and motivator on the heels of an earlier advertising campaign.
- Responses are easy to measure.
- Especially good for reaching previous visitors or selling tickets to a special event.
- It calls for action by the reader (or it should!).
- It is quick and flexible.



#### **Disadvantages of Direct Mail:**

- Direct mail can be expensive.
- It is most cost-effective for businesses that can offer a specific discount or offer, and less so for tourism promotion organizations making a general presentation.

#### **A Few Ways to Make Your Direct Mail More Effective:**

- **Make Sure The Price Is Right** – More than anything else, make sure that what you offer the consumer, in terms of special promotions or prices, will make the difference.
- **Sell them On Your Destination** – Make sure the material you provide would make *you* want to visit.
- **Let Them Know Who You Are on the Envelope** – Direct mail must work fast, or it will end up in the trash.

- **Have a Benefit Strategy** – The best thing that you can tell someone in a direct mail piece is how save money. Make that your destination's offer.
- **Grab the Reader's Attention** – Look for a dramatic opening.
- **Don't Be Afraid of Long Copy** – This is what makes direct mail different from the other media we have suggested. It's okay here to write long copy, just make it visually appealing through short paragraphs, etc.
- **Give the Reader a Reason to Act** – End the piece with a call to action, something they need to do and a deadline. Don't let them procrastinate.
- **Use Your Board and Staff to Test Your Mail Piece** – Don't guess at what will appeal to the reader. Direct mail is too expensive to waste. Avoid tricks or gimmicks.
- **Give Something Away** – There's nothing like a contest to promote a destination.
- **If It Works, Do It Again** - Use direct mail offerings that work on an even bigger mailing list next time, or in a different target market.

## **The Argument for Campaigns**

Jane Maas, the "I Love New York" whiz, says that the *smaller* your advertising budget, the more important it is to have a *campaign*.

An advertising campaign is a series of ads with similar themes, looks or sounds, as opposed to a single advertisement that is completely re-designed every time you want to run another one. The advantage of a campaign is that the ads build upon one another. They become more familiar as viewers or readers see the next in the series.

Your readers/viewers will even subconsciously incorporate material from your other ads they've seen into the new ones, thus creating a "compounding" effect of your advertising. It's like seeing a familiar face in a crowd, or in this case on a crowded page.

An excellent example of a campaign is the *California: Find Yourself Here* series that we mentioned previously. Several ads have been designed, all with different spectacular California settings, but with the common slogan. Although each ad can stand alone, the series re-enforces the message.

Effective campaigns are especially important in destination marketing, where you are trying to build an image for your area. It is quite possible to incorporate different aspects of your

[illegible]



sell one-half of it in smaller ads to businesses within their community (as seen in the Mammoth ad shown here). This gives the entire community more exposure while making impressive newspaper or magazine advertisements more affordable.

## When to Advertise

The key to successful advertising timing is to place your ads when they can influence the *decision-making process* of potential visitors. This means neither too early (in which case your destination won't be remembered at vacation-planning time) or too late (after the decision has been made to go somewhere else). In order to know when to advertise you need to know when you want your guests to visit.

If you created a seasonality chart in Chapter 4, you can use that to help determine which times of the year could benefit from increased promotion. If you surveyed your visitors using the General Visitor Questionnaire Form, you have a good idea of how much "lead time" visitors to your area require in their decision making.

You might have found that leisure visitors to your area coming from a relatively close location make the decision to visit a week or less before visiting. Others may plan a month or more ahead of time.

If many of your visitors booked their trip through a travel agent, you'll probably find that they made their reservations four to six weeks ahead of their visit.

Visitors using the Internet for their travel research and reservations often make last minute decisions to take advantage of special offers.

**Helpful Hint:** *The closer your visitors live to your destination, the more likely it is that their decision to visit was made on relatively short notice.*



## Brochures and visitor's guides

Although the Internet is rapidly changing how we disseminate information about our destinations, and may eventually completely reshape our thinking in terms of the creation of printed literature, it hasn't replaced the printed word yet.

Brochures and visitors guides are still the most common pieces of literature used by tourism bureaus or chambers of commerce to promote visitation. Whether they are placed in racks and magazine stands around the community, or used as response pieces to advertising and mailed to interested parties, they still have an important function in the promotional arena.

They are the backbone of many tourism promotional efforts, although that may change in a very few years. So until the traditional brochure is completely replaced by the World Wide Web, which may never happen (radio wasn't replaced by television!) let's take a look at these stalwarts of tourism marketing, our printed materials.

### **Rack Cards and Brochures**

The **brochure**, and its little sister the **rack card**, are generally used as the very first printed piece developed by any community to promote itself as a visitor destination. The brochure is generally a multi-folded printed document that, when folded to its display size measures 4" x 9." The rack card is simply a card with the same final measurements, printed only on the front and back. It does not unfold but simply serves as an inexpensive "bait piece," used to provide only the most basic information about a destination. Both the folded brochure and the single rack card neatly fit into the standard letter size envelope for mailing.

Some communities print rack cards for the sole purpose of mass distribution in brochure racks across the region. Their inexpensive price makes them ideal for this purpose. Rack cards generally feature a full-color photograph of the area on the front, along with the area name printed at the top. Perhaps your tourism promotion office toll-free phone number may appear at the bottom, suggesting a call for more information. The reverse side (the back) often features a brief "sales pitch," your web site address, and perhaps a small map showing where your community or region is located. Individual businesses may well want to put a "discount coupon" of some sort on the back, such as a two-for-one admission offer.

As travelers frequently pick up literally dozens of brochures and rack cards whenever they see a brochure stand, saving money by using this single card can pay off in lower printing and distribution costs and still get your message into the hands of the traveling public.

Your brochure, if you choose to produce one, generally allows you to have significantly more information about your area than the rack card. Brochures are usually full-color, feature numerous photographs and considerable text along with all the necessary information such as addresses, map, web site address, toll free number, etc. that you tried to put on the smaller rack card.

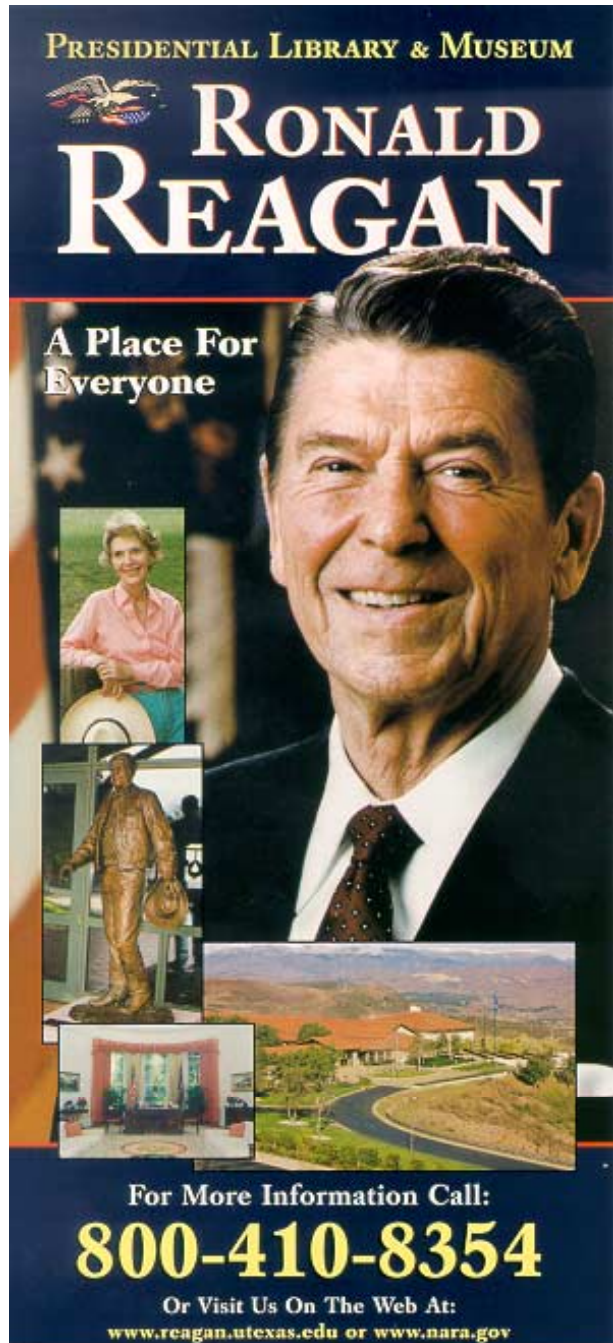
Although usually folded to the 4" x 9" final size, brochures can be any of a variety of sizes when unfolded. A common size uses paper measuring 12" x 9" which folds twice to the 4" x 9" final size. It is not unusual to see brochures that measure 16" x 9" unfolded or even 16" x 18" unfolded. Use the size you need to get your message across, but remember that expense grows with the size of the brochure.

**Helpful Hint:** *Printing costs are not the only expenses that rise as a brochure gets bigger. Shipping costs soar as brochures get larger and printers can get fewer into a standard box. This is reflected every time you attend a trade show, or ship the brochures to distributors elsewhere.*



#### **A Dozen Tips for Effective Brochures:**

- 1. Put Your Sales Pitch on the Cover** – The cover of the brochure works like the headline of a print ad. Four out of five people never get beyond it, so you have to “make the sale” with the cover. Surprisingly, many brochures just don’t follow this rule.
- 2. Insist on a “Consistent Look” with your Other Advertising** - Carry out the theme of your print ads (newspaper and magazine) with your brochure design.



3. **Use a Big Photo on the Cover** – As with print ads, research suggests a single big picture is better than several small ones.
4. **Select Pictures that Tell a Story** – The right photographs can often tell the story better than words.
5. **Always Use Captions with Photos** – Photo captions are the best-read element of a brochure after the initial headline.
6. **Don't be Afraid of Long Copy** – If people have bothered to write for, or pick up your brochure, they are prospective visitors. Tell them everything (within reason) that they need to know.
7. **Spotlight the Important Facts** – One of the most important criticisms of brochures is that they don't give enough hard facts. So tell your story, and use graphics to spotlight important information.
8. **Use Photographs, Not Drawings** – Research says that photographs increase recall 26% over drawings. Photographs equal reality in the reader's mind, especially in tourism.
9. **Make Your Brochure Worth Keeping** – Give your piece longer life and longer selling power by making it worth saving.
10. **Make It "Classy"** – Your brochure is your calling card. Make it as good as your budget will allow.
11. **Feature a Call to Action** – What action do you want the reader to take now? Visit your area? Make a reservation? Each piece of literature must have this element.
12. **Put Your Headline on the Top Third of the Cover** – When displayed in a rack with other brochures or cards, only the top one-third of yours will be visible.

There are a lot of variables to consider when printing a brochure including the weight of the paper, the use of color, the finished size and how many to print. It is important to get professional advice in these matters from a qualified graphic designer, and make sure you get at least three bids from respected printers before making a decision. You can do virtually anything with a brochure; the only limit is your imagination and your budget!

**Helpful Hint:** *Believe it or not, the sales representative of a trusted printing firm can be quite helpful in design issues. They know little tricks of the trade that can save you big dollars at printing time.*



### Visitor's Guides

If there is one piece of promotional material that will probably change significantly, or at least evolve significantly due to the Internet, it is the magazine-style visitor's guide. There is no doubt that the visitor's guide packs a big punch. They are colorful, full of information and generally the size of a full magazine or larger. And publishing one yourself puts you in the magazine business, with all the attendant headaches and rewards.

There are two paths to creating a visitor's guide for your destination.

The first is to publish it yourself. That means selling advertising, laying out the pages, laying out the ads, writing the copy, proofreading, contracting for printing, proofing again, and handling all the other myriad of details that publishers go through to get the book out. The upside is that if you are fortunate enough to generate more revenue than the publication costs to produce, you end up with a profit. That money can be put to great use to expand your marketing efforts, and further promote your destination. The downside is that it is extremely labor intensive and there is a significant likelihood of losing money, especially on the first one.



The other way is to contract with an outside publisher. The advantages to this road is that in exchange for being able to tout their publication as the “official” visitors guide while selling ads, they are usually willing to do all the work and shoulder the financial risk. The disadvantage to this method is that you lose editorial and advertising control to a certain extent, depending on how you negotiate your contract. You *may* lose the opportunity to share in the profits, depending again on your contract wording. If you go this route, make sure to see other similar publications they have produced to check for quality, and contact other customers to make sure the publisher has a good reputation, and does what they say they will do.

The choice is yours.

Try to get a feel for how many to publish by checking the number of inquiries you received in previous years and estimating what sort of impact your planned advertising or promotional campaigns will have on the demand for the new guide. When looking at the economics of publishing your guide, make sure you include not only printing costs, but the cost of shipping the guide to distributors and shows. Also consider the cost of postage if you plan to use it as a response piece to advertising, and the actual mechanics of how the guide will get into the visitor's hands. Will it be distributed locally as well? If so, who will keep distribution locations stocked with guides? Look for all the hidden costs in visitor's guide production and distribution, and ask similar communities how they handle those issues. The helpful people at California Tourism or your rural regional organization (see Chapter 12) can give you suggestions regarding other destinations to check with.

What you put in a visitor's guide can vary as wildly as Death Valley does from the Sonoma Valley. But generally, tourists expect them to contain at least the following information:

- Accommodations
- Activities
- Advertising (most visitors report finding the ads quite helpful)
- Calendar of Events
- Campground Information
- Dining Information
- Editorial copy (magazine style stories on what to see, do, etc.)
- Maps
- Shopping
- Theater, Arts and Entertainment Information
- Transportation Information
- Visitor Services

Again, what you put in your guide depends to a great extent on who is publishing it and the nature of your destination. If you are a membership organization such as a Chamber of Commerce or Convention & Visitors Bureau, you may well want to put in a list of your members. But resist the temptation to fill it with information not important to actual visitors in your area. A chamber membership roster with insurance agents, printing shops and so forth may not belong in a true visitor's guide.

**Helpful Hint:** *Before beginning production of a visitor's guide, sit down with your advisory group and lay down some policies that your publisher must adhere to. Often issues such as who can advertise (do you want to allow advertisers from other communities?) and who has the final control over editorial content can sneak up on you and cause problems later.*



## Public Relations – The Art of Influence

If you've ever been working in your office and somebody shouted out "There's a writer from Sunset Magazine on line one," you know what it feels like to be in the public relations business. And depending on the outcome of that phone call, you either felt the elation that

comes with major publicity for your destination, or the sinking feeling of opportunity slipping through your fingers.

Public relations, in the context of destination promotion, means working with the media to *generate positive* publicity for your area, and to *counter negative* publicity, while always telling the truth. Sound complex? It is.

The effective destination-marketing public relations representative has to be part journalist, part salesman and part diplomat. And the chances are that if you're reading this handbook to begin a destination-marketing program, it's going to be you!

## **You and the Media**

You recently saw an article in a major newspaper travel section that talked about another destination and you thought, "we have just as much to offer our visitors as they do, maybe even more! Why didn't they write about us?"

The answer could be that the other destination sent the newspaper a press release, a media kit with photographs and contact phone numbers, made personal contact with a writer through a conference or gathering or invited a freelance or staff writer to their destination for a first-hand look.

Working with the media means matching your desire for positive publicity with an editor's need for news.

## **The Press Release**

The most basic public relations technique is to send out a mass-mailed press release. Using a media list of targeted media and writers, this technique is used to announce a new attraction, a special event, a change in a previously known commodity (new hours, days of operation, etc.) or a variety of other "news" events. It should not be used to send out general information about a destination without including some sort of "news angle." A press release with no news value is on a short ride to the "round file."

As with any news story, a press release must answer the basic "Five W's" that reporters learn in their first journalism classes, those being Who, What, When, Where and Why. Any press release that does not answer those important questions misses the basic journalistic point.

The following page shows an example of a well-done press release, from the Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau.

# NEWS



**Contact:** Julien Foreman, Director of Communications (310) 510-1520

## Catalina Island Hotel Availability Now on World Wide Web

AVALON, Catalina Island, May 10, 1999 — Finding out about hotel availability on Catalina Island just got easier with the launching of a new hotel availability page on **catalina.com** – the official web site to Catalina Island.

The Catalina Island Visitor Bureau & Chamber of Commerce will update information on the hotel availability page throughout the day, seven days a week, giving the latest information of what's available on the island.

"The hotel availability page will be a great resource to visitors planning a trip to the island," said Wayne Griffin, President/CEO Catalina Island Visitors Bureau.

The site - **catalina.com** - also provides users the option of requesting a free copy of the Catalina Island Visitors guide via e-mail. The Visitors Guide is the most comprehensive brochure published about the island and contains all the information needed for planning a trip to Catalina Island.

New pages still under construction on **catalina.com** include a media information site, where representatives of the press can get the latest news and download press information, as well as a travel agent page and meeting planner page.

Although Catalina Island is moving full speed ahead on the information super highway, phone calls requesting information about transportation, lodging, activities and events are welcomed by calling the Catalina Island Visitors Bureau & Chamber of Commerce at (310) 510- 1520. Or hey – check out their website at **catalina.com**

-30-

**Catalina Island Visitors Bureau & Chamber of Commerce**  
PO Box 217 Avalon, CA • 90704 • (310) 510-1520 • FAX (310) 510-7607  
World Wide Web: [www.catalina.com](http://www.catalina.com)



## Ten Tips for Effective Press Releases

- **Make the Lead Direct and to the Point** – Editors often make judgments about the value of what you have to say within the first two sentences. If you don't have their attention by then, you never will.
- **Quickly Tell Who, What, When, Where and Why** – Use the first paragraph or two to get this information across.
- **Use Short Sentences and Paragraphs** – Keep your language brief, concise and to the point. Don't try to show off your vocabulary, use common language.
- **Put Contact Information at the Top of the First Page** – Include contact name, phone number and the date of the release.
- **Use the Phrase "For Immediate Release"** – This means the editor can publish it immediately, or whenever they wish. (It's generally a poor idea to ask them to wait until a later date. Don't send the release out if you don't want it published as soon as it is received.)
- **Assume it Will be Published as You Wrote It** – Write the release so that it can be published with no editing at all. This rarely happens, but it's exciting when it does.
- **Assume it Won't be Published as You Wrote It** – Put the most important information at the top, and the least important at the bottom. Most editors edit by cutting off the last paragraphs.
- **Double-Check Everything for Accuracy** – There's nothing worse than having to send out a "correction" to your own press release. This is especially important with names and phone numbers that you hope to have published.
- **Type Double-Spaced and on One Side of the Paper** – Indicate how many pages are in the total release on every page if more than one, as in "Page 1 of 3," "Page 2 of 3," etc. End each typed page with "-more-" if the release continues on another page.
- **End the Press Release Properly** – Your last paragraph should say "For more information contact..." At the bottom of the last page put these marks:

#### or -30-

## Press Conferences

Press conferences often sound like a wonderful idea, but in practicality, they are rarely successful in destination marketing. And an unfortunate truth about the world of journalism is that reporters find them much more interesting when a scandal is breaking than when you're disseminating good news.



And reporters usually want a “different angle” from that reported by their competitors. For that reason, they may shun news conferences where everyone basically gets the same story.

None-the-less, given the right circumstances and a story of major significance, press conferences can be a powerful tool.

Consider a press conference only when you are dealing with the local media, where you have a much greater chance of a successful turnout.

Press conferences are often used to add drama to an announcement, so it might pay to hold your press conference at a special, or even outdoor location. If announcing a new tourism promotion program, for example, consider holding the event in your most spectacular (although easily accessible) natural location.

### Ten Tips for a Successful Press Conference

- **Find a Suitable Site** – Make sure it's easily accessible for reporters on the go.

- **Plan Ahead** – Set the day and time, mid-week and mid-morning often work best, and fax out announcements a week in advance. Follow-up with a phone call to make sure they received the fax, then call again the day of the conference.
- **Prepare a Media Kit** – Have everything you are going to say available in writing, along with supplemental information and contact names and numbers.
- **Rehearse the Participants** – This is show business! They should be prepared for friendly as well as critical questions.
- **Arrive Early** – Make sure your set-up is as you want it. Set up chairs, microphones and podium. Make the background as visually interesting as possible.
- **Offer Refreshments** – As corny as this sounds reporters love coffee and a donut or bagel.
- **Start 10 Minutes Late** – This allows for latecomers but doesn't penalize those who arrived on time.
- **Allow for Questions & Answers** – Television reporters are especially reluctant to broadcast your "stand-up" announcement from a podium. They want to ask you one-on-one questions afterwards.
- **Notice Who Comes and Who Doesn't** – Make note of no-shows and call them after the press conference to provide the information.
- **Follow-Up** – If you don't see a broadcast or read a story in the newspaper immediately, follow-up with the reporters to see if you can offer more information. If they didn't find your press conference news worthy, you need to know!

### **One Picture is Worth...**

It may not be worth a thousand words, but being able to offer *useable* photography to the media is critical to an effective public relations program. And in this instance, useable means of professional quality and legally available for publication at no cost to the media.

The media will want assurance that there are no copyright issues with the photographs you provide them. If you hire a professional photographer to take pictures of your area for your use, one of the first points of negotiation is to assure that you have unlimited ownership rights to

each picture. This will often involve significant additional cost over “one-time” rights, but the photos are of no use to you if you can’t give them out freely.

Although black and white prints were the format of choice for many years, these days 35mm color slides or digital photos are more popular. Many destinations make their photography available for “downloading” off their Internet websites. This allows the media, often working on a tight deadline, to access photography quickly.

If you have sufficient skill to take the photographs yourself, try to get photos of people having fun at your destination. And make sure to get signed “model release” forms from any recognizable faces. This insures that you have their permission to publish their photographic image. Ask your local newspaper for a copy of the form they use, they should be happy to oblige.

Build a library of photos that illustrate your area, both scenic and showing “visitors” enjoying themselves. Make sure you have a selection of both “vertical” and “horizontal” shots to add variety to your collection. Make sure you have full descriptions of each photograph, including the “who, what, when, where and why.” Attach them to the backs of your prints, and list them by number for your digital photography and slides. Don’t reproduce slides more than “one generation” away from the originals, as quality drops considerably as copies are made of copies. Don’t be surprised if some publications insist on original slides only. (Make sure that they sign a written agreement to return them by a certain date, with a provision for a monetary penalty if they are lost.)

As special events occur, assign a photographer to capture them for your catalog. Make sure you have representations of your area in every season as well.

### **Make Your Photos Available**

Remember that you have gathered a photo library to publicize your community. Build a library that has all of the following:

- Black and white prints
- 35 mm color slides
- Representative shots of each season
- Action shots of typical activities
- Special events
- Major buildings and landmarks
- Key people
- Unique features in the surrounding area.